

SLED FOR RED CELEBRATES TEN YEARS OF WINTER FUN

ACR Health's 10th Annual Sled for RED Cardboard Sledding Derby was a day to remember on Saturday, February 8th at Four Seasons Golf & Ski Center in Fayetteville.

The Cardboard Sledding Derby kicked off with teams sliding, tumbling and sometimes walking down the hill towards the finish line. Teams competed for the fastest time, best costume and most creative sled. Team B4U capped it all off with a second run down the hill to win the ultimate bragging rights as the fastest sled.

Following the derby participants gathered in the heated tent to warm up with samples from local favorites like Limp Lizard, Strong Hearts Café and Karen's Catering of Syracuse. The adults in the room also previewed some seasonal brews from Bell's Brewery at their custom cardboard bar and voted on their favorite concoction in the competition for CNY's Best Wintry Drink. The Craftsman took the prize for the second year in a row with their novel "Marshmallow Shooter". The event raised over \$24,000 this year, bringing the 10-year fundraising total of Sled for Red to over \$210,000 to benefit ACR Health's clients and programs. As Wil Murtaugh said, "Lives have been changed – lives have been saved – thanks to this community. We couldn't be more grateful for your support!"

Thank you to our incredible sponsors: Bell's Brewery; The Craftsman; Empower Federal Credit Union; Kinney Drug Foundation; Nascentia Healthcare; PharmBlue and Witty Wicks; and Media Sponsors: 95X and News Channel 9 WSYR.



Moe Harrington led the Great Broads team to the Top Fundraising Award, bringing in \$3,081



Fastest Sled Winners - Team B4U

NORTHERN NEW YORK GIVES BACK

Last December Northern New York created its own version of Giving Tuesday. #giveNNY began as a way for people and businesses to make donations that stay directly in the Northern New York Community.

A \$10,000 match from the Northern New York Community Foundation catapulted the campaign to record success. The fundraising campaign and the matching funds brought in nearly \$25,000. Thanks to this generosity, 27 local nonprofit organizations operating in Northern New York, including ACR Health, each received \$909 from #giveNNY.



From left: #giveNNY founder Jennifer Cross Hodge, Volunteer Transportation Center, presents a check to Cari Grace Knight, NNY Regional Manager, ACR Health, Watertown

2019 HOLIDAY ANGELS GIFTS OF JOY

Every December we invite members of the community to connect directly with our clients in need through the Holiday Angel initiative. Donations of clothing, household items and other essentials that make life a little easier are delivered to clients to brighten the holiday season.

This year, 58 outstanding angels made a difference in the lives of 204 clients. Thanks to an extremely generous donation of \$5,000 from Broadway CARES, Equity Fights AIDS, clients received more tangible gifts like groceries or transportation. All told, the value of gifts and donations totaled \$34,509 – thank you Holiday Angels!

Visit us online for more photos and a complete list of our 2019 Holiday Angels at acrhealth.org/events/holiday_angel



Long-time supporter and "Angel" Sandy Jarvis drops off her gifts.



627 West Genesee Street
Syracuse, NY 13204

ACR Health offers its services without discrimination based on age, race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political affiliation, marital status, handicapped status, or mode of transmission.

ACR Health is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Follow us:



@ACRHealth @ACRHealth @ACRHealth @ACRHealthCNY

Supported by:



UPCOMING EVENTS

MORE INFO & REGISTER AT ACRHEALTH.ORG/EVENTS



April 25, 2020 - Saturday
22nd Annual Hike for Life

Join us at Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica for a fun event featuring games, lively festivities, and prizes. The Hike for Life begins at 1:00 p.m.



June 7, 2020 - Sunday
28th Annual AIDS Walk/Run

Central New York's oldest and most successful AIDS fundraiser begins at 10:00 a.m. at Beaver Lake Nature Center, Baldwinsville.



October 25, 2020 - Sunday
21st Annual First Frost Walk

Join us for fun and games inside the Thompson Park Zoo and Conservancy, featuring lively contests and prizes. Event begins at 1:00 p.m. Please leave your furry friends at home.

INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY. GET INVOLVED TODAY!
ACRHealth.org/events • 315.475.2430

HIV/AIDS LGBTQ EQUALITY SUBSTANCE USE POVERTY

For more information on all programs or if you wish to unsubscribe from the newsletter: information@ACRHealth.org or 315.475.2430



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Syracuse, N.Y.
Permit No. 241



March 2020

NY STATE SENATOR RACHEL MAY SECURES \$100,000 SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

In 2019, The Q Center at ACR Health was awarded funding through the New York State Department of Health. However, due to budget shortfalls the funds were unavailable. That was when NY State Senator Rachel May stepped in and secured \$100,000 in funding to help maintain operations at The Q Center.

ACR Health thanks Senator May for her efforts to support programming for local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer youth.

These resources have:

- Funded a full time Youth Development Specialist to work with LGBTQ youth and families in the Central and Mohawk Valley Q Centers;
- Provided over 500 rides for LGBTQ youth to attend Q Center programming;
- Provided over 600 meals to LGBTQ youth at our Q Centers;
- Hired two paid Q Center Peers to assist with program delivery, outreach and recruitment; and
- Started community workgroups in Syracuse and Utica to develop a community-wide needs assessment focusing on LGBTQ youth and adults for gaps in services and develop a collaborative plan to fill those gaps.

Wil Murtaugh, Executive Director of ACR Health, said, "The Q Center provides essential services to LGBTQ youth and it creates community for many young people who have been ostracized by their peers and even their families. We have made great strides towards equality in recent years, but homophobia, transphobia and bullying continue to plague our youth. We are honored to have the support of our incredible ally in Albany, Senator Rachel May. She sees the value of supporting our community and has stepped up to make a difference – thank you, Senator May!"

37 Years

Serving
Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson,
Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga,
Oswego, and St. Lawrence Counties

WHY LGBTQ YOUTH NEED OUR SUPPORT

- LGBTQ youth are almost 6 times more likely to experience depression, anxiety and other mental health problems than their peers
- LGBTQ teens are more than 8 times more likely to report having attempted suicide
- LGBTQ youth who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence are 3 times more likely to use illegal drugs.
- Studies indicate that between 25% and 50% of homeless youth are LGBTQ and on the streets because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

"The services The Q Center provides for LGBTQ youth in Syracuse, Utica, and surrounding areas is vital. ACR Health is a leader on so many of the pressing issues facing our community and I am proud to support their critical work in

the state budget and look forward to continuing to support them in future years."

- New York State Senator Rachel May



ACR Health Deputy Executive Director for Operations Carrie Large recognizes NY State Senator May for her support.

WIL MURTAUGH
Executive Director

MILLCENT DAVIS
Chair

CRAIG EVANS, ED.D
Vice-Chair

M. PAUL MAHALICK, CPA
Treasurer

SHARON GORDON, MSW, BCC
Secretary

REBECCA BOSTWICK, MPA
FREDERICK FARRAR, MD
STEPHANIE HOPPE FEDORKA, ESQ., MPA
THE REV'D GEORGINA HEGNEY
LEKIA HILL
ANDREW LONDON, PHD
MAUREEN MCCARTHY TRACY
TODD PANEK
JARED RELES, PHARM D
NEIL TIERSON, PHARM D
JENNIFER WOODMAN

Interested in serving on our Board?
Contact us at (315) 475-2430.

ACR HEALTH HOTLINE
800.475.2430

Syracuse Offices:
• 627 West Genesee Street
• 990 James Street, 2nd floor
• The Q Center
835 Hiawatha Blvd West
• Syracuse Syringe Exchange
637 West Genesee Street

Utica Office, Q Center, and Syringe Exchange:
• 287 Genesee Street, 2nd floor

Watertown Offices:
• 120 Washington Street, 3rd floor
• Watertown Syringe Exchange:
135 Franklin Street

Canton Office:
• 101 Main Street, 3rd floor

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Will Sudderth



Growing INTO 2020

We are off to an incredible start for 2020 here at ACR Health. Not only is this the start of a new decade, 2020 also marks a pivotal benchmark of Governor Cuomo's plan to End the AIDS Epidemic.

This year we are testing more individuals to identify previously undiagnosed HIV+ cases, getting these clients into treatment to suppress the virus, and expanding access to PrEP, the once daily pill that can prevent transmission of HIV. We are fighting the opioid epidemic, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and Hepatitis C. We also continue to support our LGBTQ youth and their families.

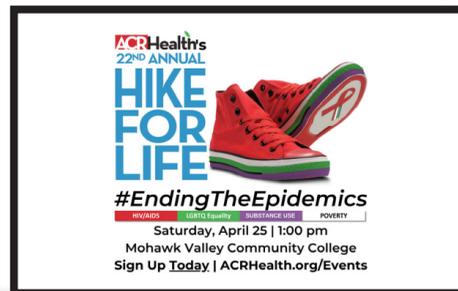
Making strides in all these areas will require dedication, commitment and engagement from our supporters. Fortunately, this community is already stepping up in 2020. This February our cardboard sledding derby fundraiser, Sled for Red, celebrated its tenth year and raised over \$24,000, blowing past our \$20,000 goal. We were also proud to collaborate with CNY Pride for Pride Night at the Syracuse Crunch for an incredible night of inclusion and fun.

I hope you will help us carry this enthusiasm forward throughout the year. We will need you more than ever with the Hike for Life coming up in Utica, the AIDS Walk/Run in June and Watertown's First Frost Walk in October.

This is going to be a busy year to say the least. In order to ensure our success we have worked very hard to broaden our community of support. To that end, I am thrilled to introduce you to the newest class of the ACR Health Board of Directors, led by our friend Millicent Davis as Board Chair.

Thank you for your support and guidance over the years, and we look forward to making 2020 a year to remember!

COMING UP NEXT...



ACR HEALTH'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Millicent Davis
Chair



Craig Evans, Ed.D
Vice Chair



Paul Mahalick, CPA
Treasurer



Sharon Gordon, MSW, BCC
Secretary



Rebecca Bostwick, MPA



Frederick Farrar, MD



Stephanie Hoppe Fedorka,
Esq., MPA



The Rev'd Georgina Hegney



Lekia K. Hill



Andrew S. London, PhD



Maureen McCarthy Tracy



Todd Panek



Jared Reles, PharmD



Neil R. Tierson, PharmD



Jennifer Woodman

CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITY BY INVESTING IN OUR EMPLOYEES

Like many workplaces, one of ACR Health's core values is to promote wellness, both for our clients and for our hardworking employees. Our Wellness Committee works to help employees de-stress, offers incentives for healthy habits and fosters a collegial workspace environment. From offering healthy snacks in the office, coordinating team-building activities or providing free bio-scans for every employee from the University of Rochester, the Wellness Committee exemplifies our values for teamwork and wellness.

The Wellness Committee wants you to get to know our team better too - be on the lookout for our peer nominated Employee Spotlight for excellence! We are always looking for great people to add to our team - check our website for openings and opportunities!



Lots of contenders in the Ugly Sweater Contest at our December staff meeting, the Wellness Committee couldn't pick just one 'winner'!

CVS PHARMACY PROVIDES \$5,000 FOR HIV TESTING SERVICES

CVS Pharmacy recently granted ACR Health with \$5,000 for expanded HIV and STD testing. This funding will allow us to provide testing to everyone who walks in to one of our offices.

ACR Health operates an Ending the Epidemic (ETE) Program, a comprehensive prevention program that empowers clients to take control of their HIV status. The ETE program offers HIV and STD testing and counseling directly to clients while maintaining a "status neutral" approach. This means getting HIV positive individuals into treatment and HIV negative individuals with higher risks into programs that aim to lower their risk factors. These efforts are even more effective when clients have access to PrEP and PEP, the medications that can prevent HIV infections.

The ETE Program primarily aims to serve men and women of color due to higher than average rates of new HIV infections in these populations. These additional funds will help us reach more people, giving us the opportunity to connect clients to care, prevent the spread of HIV and improve health. John Arcaro, Director of Prevention - Community Initiatives, said, "Thanks to the support of CVS Pharmacy, we will be able to provide HIV and STD testing to more people, regardless of their demographic background. This funding makes our community safer for everyone across the board and will empower individuals to lead healthier lives".

HARM REDUCTION - WHY IT MATTERS

Sera, a client at ACR Health, needed help. Sera had accepted that she would probably die from using heroin. Family losses, a miscarriage and underlying mental health issues led her to heroin at her lowest point. In 2014, Sera enrolled in ACR Health's syringe exchange program.

Over the years, service providers have developed different strategies when approaching people with substance use disorders.

Under the "War on Drugs", substance use was treated as a criminal justice issue and led to mass incarcerations, oftentimes disproportionately of people of color. This approach did little to prevent the current opioid crisis and some aspects of this crisis can be directly attributed to these punitive measures.

We now have a better understanding that having a substance use disorder is a disease and we approach it as a public health issue with evidence-based treatment. We call this "Harm Reduction".

The Harm Reduction Coalition says, "Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs." ACR Health Executive Director Wil Murtaugh puts it more plainly, "It is reducing the harm of an action."

ACR Health works to integrate Harm Reduction into many of our programs, taking a nonjudgmental and stigma-free approach. We do this in our syringe exchange program, giving clients the chance to learn how to inject

safely to avoid abscesses and teaching overdose prevention strategies. We do this in our clinic by removing barriers to vulnerable people in need of care.

A harm reduction approach helps us get to the root causes of substance use. Our client Sera says, "Nobody wants to live like that. The stress of answering to a narcotic is so big. One of the things I learned was harm reduction can help an addict live long enough to get to sobriety when they are ready."

"Your staff saved my life," she said

That is the core of the Harm Reduction approach. Helping people find ways to make a healthier choice and knowing their options. For some people that is coming to the syringe exchange. For others that means using less often in a day. And for some people that means coming to ACR Health's clinic for medically assisted treatment.

"You can get to the real issue about what's going on and I guarantee you that the real issue is not the drug. It's something else that's going on," said Alessandra Miller, ACR Health's Director of Drug User Health.

Sera worked with ACR Health to find her way. Because she was already engaged with services she had the tools she needed for sustainable change when she was ready. That moment came for her when she found out she was pregnant.

"I had a reason to live for," she says.

She stopped using immediately and remains a forceful advocate for how harm reduction saves lives. She knows, because it saved her.

"Your staff saved my life."

Our Mission:

To create healthy communities by opening doors to services that enhance the wellbeing of all.

Our Vision:

A community in which every person has the opportunity to achieve optimal health and equality.

Our Values:

Commitment to Excellence
Respect for People & Community
Wellbeing
Integrity
Empowerment
Teamwork